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P 071055Z JUL 08
FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4609
INFO RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 3116
RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY 0054
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 4835

UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 000606

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, DRL/AWH AND DRL/IRF

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KIRF](#) [CB](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: TIM SAKHORN'S RELEASE CONFIRMED; CURRENT WHEREABOUTS
UNKNOWN

REF: A)07 HCMC 1145 B) 07 HCMC 836 C)07 HCMC 733 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A reliable Consulate contact has confirmed that former Khmer Krom monk Tim Sakhorn was released from prison after completing his 12-month term for "undermining national unity" (reftels) but reports conflict as to his actual date of release and current whereabouts. Post has requested official confirmation of Sakhorn's status from HCMC and An Giang authorities. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) A reliable Consulate contact in An Giang province said former Khmer Krom monk Tim Sakhorn was released the afternoon of June 30, after having served 12 months in prison (including pre-trial detention) for "undermining national unity" under Article 87 of the GVN Penal Code. During his November 2007 trial, authorities claimed Sakhorn organized and provided assistance to land rights protesters in several Delta provinces.

In June 2007, community witnesses in Cambodia reported that Sakhorn had been defrocked and deported by Cambodian officials for allegedly violating Buddhist rules of conduct. The Cambodian Ministry of Interior states that Tim Sakhorn went to Vietnam voluntarily, and that they have a document thumbprinted by Tim Sakhorn stating as much. Tim Sakhorn resurfaced a month later in Vietnamese custody in the border province of An Giang.

¶3. (SBU) Though none of Sakhorn's former Khmer monk colleagues have seen or spoken with him since his release, Human Rights Watch and international media reports say Sakhorn was released on June 28 and escorted by authorities to the village of his birth in Ba Chuc commune, An Giang, where a welcoming party was organized and a house with land was offered to Sakhorn for resettlement. Sakhorn was then "taken on a tour" of HCMC and Hanoi.

¶4. (SBU) Post is awaiting a formal reply regarding Sakhorn's status from HCMC and An Giang authorities.

¶5. (U) This cable was coordinated with Embassy Phnom Penh and Embassy Hanoi.

FAIRFAX